Chapter 7: Universal Design- Cultural Project.

<http://www.tolerance.org/activity/mexican-american-labor-us>

This lesson plan addresses the issue the policies and attitudes of Mexican and Mexican American workers in the United States. It is designed for a social studies class and for grades 9 -12. The time to complete the lesson plan is a week. The objectives for the lesson are for students to describe how the U.S. shifted polices to acquire cheap labor from Mexican immigrants, appreciate different perspectives on Mexican and Mexican American laborers, to locate information on subordinated groups, and finally will develop a personal perspective of the topic.

The suggested procedure the lesson plan offers is first have the students describe what they know or have heard about the current issues surrounding undocumented Mexican workers in the U.S. Also ask the students their point of view on the issue and whether there should be a tighten control on the border and restrictions on Mexican immigrants. The class is divided into six teams and each team is responsible for researching the history of immigration from different groups’ perspectives. The groups that the teams can pick are: Mexican business owners, Mexican Americans living at or below the poverty line, European American business owners, U.S. Government, Mexican American workers, European working-class Americans, Mexican people searching for work. Each team is also responsible for answering the following questions: What were your group's economic needs, how did your group view each of the other groups, what was your group doing during the time periods 1845-1850; 1850-1900; 1900-1924; 1924-1930; 1930-1947; 1947-1965; 1965-1980; and 1980-present.

From the collected information construct a large wall graph where the time periods are listed and the different groups are listed. One person from each team will write the information collected on the right group and time period. After all the information is presented the teacher will direct a debate on the topic of whether or not the United States should further restrict the immigration of Mexican workers into the U.S. The debate should include the perspective of each different group that was represented by the teams. After the debate the teacher will ask the students how hard it to find published information on the different groups was and will point out that how information can be controlled and can influence public opinion.

This lesson plan covers the current debate of immigration workers but it also involves the history of immigration workers in the United States. Directing the students’ attention to the different perspectives of the topic is a great way to teach cultural diversity and diversity.